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Report of the Informal Discussion for the intersessional period of 2018/19 on the revised draft Code of Conduct for Protection of Dome A area in Antarctica

Attachments:

Atcm42_att058_e.doc: 1. Code of Conduct for Protection of Dome A area in Antarctica;
Atcm42_att059_e.jpg: 2. Map of Zone Management.

Report of the Informal Discussion for the intersessional period of 2018/19 on the revised draft Code of Conduct for Protection of Dome A area in Antarctica

Working Paper submitted by China

Summary

This document contains the report of the informal discussion on the revised draft Code of Conduct for Protection of Dome A area in Antarctica during the intersessional period of 2018-2019 at the CEP forum and China's consideration of future arrangement for the protection of the important values of Dome A area.

1. Introduction

At CEP XXI Meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, China presented WP14 (Report of the Informal Discussion for the intersessional period of 2017/18 on the draft Code of Conduct for the Exploration and Research in Dome A Area in Antarctica) in which China provided an overview of the informal intersessional discussions led by China during the 2017/18 intersessional period regarding to the draft CoC prepared by China as agreed by the Committee at CEP XX Meeting in Beijing, China. There had some general and particular concern shared in the discussion and some concrete points were suggested. China replied that some changes to the text of the draft Code of Conduct based on suggestions provided by the Members would be made and its quality would be improved. China also introduced some research activities recently carried out in Dome A area during the discussion at CEP XXI Meeting and emphasized that it welcomed and promoted international scientific collaboration within Dome A and Kunlun Station areas. China encourage interested Members and Observers to contribute to the draft CoC and share their thoughts on how to improve the CoC. With the help of ATS, China invited participation in the discussion on the revised draft Code of Conduct for Dome A at the CEP forum on January 7, 2019 and requested the comments and responses before March 10, 2019. Germany, New Zealand, France, United States, Australia and ASOC participated and provided their comments on the revised draft CoC. It's China's great appreciation to have their participation.

2. Overview of the discussion

Considering the concerns raised by some Members that some practical guidance contained in the previous draft CoC seemed defining requirements for other national programs and it's suggested that any reference to other national programs such as 'National program(s)' or similar ones should be removed and some other suggestions were also provided, China thus made significant changes to them and there don't have any kind of statement of compulsory requirements in the revised draft CoC but only encouragement. It's evidently understandable that some contents of the revised draft CoC including the zone management, which we believe is significant for the protection of Dome A area, would see its resources from the proposed management plan which was once submitted by China to the Committee because the activities that would be supposed to be regulated would remain the same or similar.

In the discussion there had the question of the scope of application of the revised draft CoC and concerns of potential restrictions for scientific activities planned and implemented by other Treaty Parties and uncomfortable feelings of its connection to the original management plan and doubt on the zone management and suggestions of this CoC being strictly produced for China's activities and not allowed to be relevant to others. ASOC expressed its appreciation of precautionary approach and encouraging the establishment of ASPAs to complement an eventual CoC or ASMA for this area.

China pointed out the significant changes which had been made and its thinking of the relationship between the revised draft CoC and the original management plan. China then clearly stated that nobody would be limited or forbidden to do something in Dome A area so long as they would be in accordance with the requirement of the Treaty and the Protocol. But China wouldn't agree that this CoC should be strictly produced for China's activities and any part of its content should not be allowed to be relevant to others because the Committee had endorsed the protection of the important values of Dome A area and it's the

common responsibility of the Parties to be aware of any form of actions towards such protection. Regarding to the issue of the zone management, China explained that such considerations were based on the suggestions of Chinese scientists who had been continuously working in Dome A for the past years and informed that China would be open to any suggestions from scientists of other countries and would encourage scientists from all the concerned countries to have discussions as much as they could to promote the idea of zone management.

At the last China expressed its regret that it still seems difficult to develop a CoC which would satisfy everyone after its many efforts for years. Given that the Committee couldn't reach consensus on how to develop mechanism for protecting the important values of Dome A area, China would provide its considerations to the Committee for the following.

3. Consideration of future arrangement

As far as China would concern, CoC would be an important and useful tool for protecting the values of Dome A area considering that China's proposal of the establishment of an ASMA was not agreed by some Parties. It's hoped that the Committee and the Parties would pay due attention to the CoC. And if anyone planned to conduct activity in Dome A area and would be somehow related to the CoC, China would welcome bilateral and multilateral consultation process and work with other Parties to realize international coordination and cooperation. For the following China would collect relevant information of activities being carried out in Dome A area and provide them to the Committee and would also welcome any further suggestions for the improvement of the CoC.

4. Recommendation

China recommends CEP recognize and support China's efforts of protecting the important values of Dome A area based on the Protocol and its Annexes and encourage the Members and organisations to develop cooperation and coordination with China and contribute to the improvement of the CoC and continuously sharing their thoughts of future management options in accordance with the Protocol and its Annexes.